

**BE CAREFUL WHEN
SPEAKING.
YOU CREATE THE WORLD
AROUND YOU WITH
YOUR WORDS.**



Creating A Positive Responsive Classroom Climate

Name: _____

Facilitated by: Cristal L. McGill, Ph.D.
Email: CristalMcGill@earthlink.net

IMPACT

Teaching by . . .

Creating Positive Mental Images

What we see in our minds directly impacts our thinking and our behavior.

Watch Out . . .

Here's a simple demonstration of the basic idea of creating mental images. One of the most curious words in the English language is "not." Right now, try to follow these instructions:

"Do NOT imagine a huge pink gorilla!"

Most people have a very difficult time following these directions. When they read those words, the very first image that pops to mind is that of a pink gorilla. Once the image has formed, it's difficult to remove. Go ahead, try it right now. Can you erase the image of the pink gorilla? If you can't, don't be surprised. This happens because the brain *cannot process the word "not."* When presented with "not," the brain will immediately create the picture that the person is trying so hard to avoid.

Over Spilled Milk

Here's another classic example of this situation. A mother has just handed her two-year-old daughter a small glass of milk. She turns to the child and says the following words:

"Now honey, don't spill your milk!"

What image is instantly created in the child's mind? As you might guess, the child immediately sees . . . milk, spilled all over the table! Now that the image of spilled milk is clearly embedded in the child's mind, can you imagine what is going to happen? Of course she *tries* to keep the milk in the glass, but that picture keeps coming back to her of milk all over the table! Suddenly, apparently without warning, the little girl's arm flies out and knocks over the glass of milk.

Therefore, accentuate the positive

The mental images teachers want to avoid are those that direct students' focus toward *negative* actions or consequences. Anytime teachers can create images of *positive* actions or consequences in students' minds, they help stack the deck for success. Thus, a general term that describes the choice of words and phrases teachers should seek to use is *positive mental images*. This is an important goal of all teachers who are consciously choosing their words to maximize the accuracy of the ideas and information they are attempting to communicate.

BEWARE OF THESE WORDS

"Not" isn't the only word that may create an effect opposite from what is originally intended by the speaker. Here are some commonly used negative words:

can't
couldn't
avoid

won't
wouldn't
stop

don't
shouldn't
never



Examples of Positive Mental Images

Reword each statement to create a more useful image for the student.

Example

Statement:

"Don't go outside without your coat on."

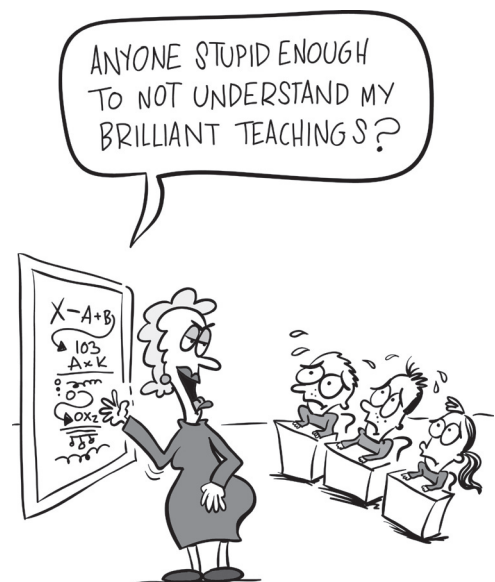
Rewording:

"Remember to wear your coat if you are going outside."

- 1) "Don't look over there."
- 2) "Try not to be late."
- 3) "Be careful, we don't want sprained ankles or broken bones."
- 4) "Please complete this assessment without looking at your notes, the board at the front of the room, or at anyone else's paper."
- 5) "Be aware of the danger of losing your patience."
- 6) "It's important to avoid dark areas, which will prevent criminals from having an opportunity to attack you."

- 7) "At no time during an emergency should you allow panic and emotions to overwhelm you."

- 8) "Avoid exiting this room by that door because you might set off the fire alarm."





Teaching by making use of Open Loops

"An Open Loop is a statement or action which leaves something to be completed later."

Situation #1

The subject of this class for high school seniors was "The Psychology of Reading." The teacher was fiddling with a TV monitor and an attached CD-ROM. When the class began the teacher said, "Watch this."

On the monitor appeared a cartoon character who proposed to introduce the students to the exciting world of reading. Letters began to appear, a lively musical tune was heard, and the character took the class through the first portion of a popular instructional reading program. When ten minutes had passed, the teacher turned off the monitor and asked, "So, how effective do you think this reading program really is?"

The students looked at him in silence. After a pause, he said, "When you finish this class not only should you be able to answer these questions in considerable detail, but you should be able to back up your answers with articulate explanations. You will even be able to provide references that support your case."

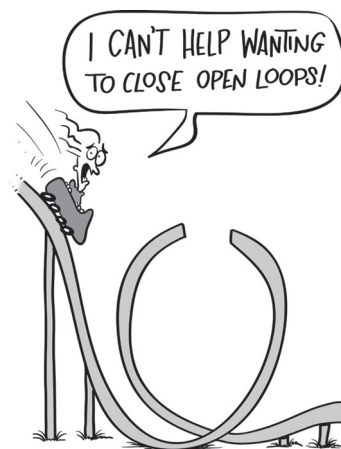
Situation #2

It was the first morning of a special two-day technical class. Students were learning to repair a new walkie-talkie that was soon going to be sold in local stores. As the session began, the teacher passed out a walkie-talkie to each person. When everyone had received one, she asked them to turn them on. None of the units worked. She then said, "Each device has some sort of problem with it—I personally saw to that. Now, here's a \$20.00 bill. If you can fix your walkie-talkie—or anyone's around you, for that matter—in the next five minutes, you may have the money. Your five minutes begins now."

The students immediately began taking their walkie-talkies apart, discussing ideas with people near them. At the end of the five minutes, no one had been able to fix their unit. The teacher now said, "OK, let's learn how to make some money fixing these things."

Clarifying

In each of these classes, the teacher was employing a strategy known as an *open loop*. Open loops are used by teachers to set the stage for what is about happen, to incite anticipation in learners. Open loops come in an infinite variety of formats. As indicated in those first examples, they can simply be a statement. Other times they may be visual, such as signs or posters placed around the room, or something written on the chalkboard. A guitar placed in plain view, even though never mentioned, may serve as an open loop if it is used later. Or perhaps a teacher brings a box to the room with various colorful supplies sticking out of the top, in plain view to the learners. All of these events can be viewed as open loops—they serve the purpose of arousing learner curiosity.



Examples of Open Loops

Here are some ways in which open loops might be used in learning situations:

“After the break we’ll be taking a look at . . . “

[This statement gives the students a hint as to what will be happening next.]

“There were three elements we found during this analysis . . . ”

[These kind of statements are referred to as “frameworks.” Whenever a specific number of points are being presented, it helps to tell the learners this in advance; it lets them organize their thinking.]

“In 30 seconds, when I say go . . . “

[This is a very short time loop used when giving directions.]

“This next section could be the most important information of this entire year.”

[These kind of statements is another example of a framework. Whenever a specific number of points are being presented, it helps to tell the learners this in advance; it lets them organize their thinking.]

“You don’t have to believe me now, you’ll see evidence of this tomorrow.”

[A clever use of an open loop, as it sets students up to mentally seek the evidence for themselves on the following day.]

“This side of the room, I’ll talk to you in a minute. For those of you on the other side, here’s a question . . . “

[Manipulative, yet effective! The students yet to receive a question are now waiting in anticipation for their turn to respond to a question, knowing it is coming!]

Can you think of an open loop you could use in your teaching environment? If so . . . write it here:



WHAT MATTERS IS HOW YOU SEE YOURSELF

“Elements of Effective Activity And Game Set-Up”

Clarity of directions (use of few words & give only 'one at a time')

Mobilizing directions (stance, tone, use of body movements to model placement of participants)

Reading the Room (as everything progresses, go with the flow, redirect the flow)

Safety Issues (Reinforce safety and you will not ask themselves to embarrass selves or others – decrease vulnerability)

Be honest and open (being misleading having hidden agendas creates threat and uncertainty – work to build in curiosity thorough novel invitation)

Creativity (making the game fresh, interesting, and engaging. Use characters)

Use your own style (let your personality carry the enthusiasm)

Fun & Light (Enjoy yourself, being 'strict' is a spirit killer, keep participation light hearted sometimes our need to control gets in our way to teach.)



Specific Techniques

7

Here are specific techniques for creating a responsive classroom.

Acknowledgement

It is the teacher who provides the acknowledgment, and the student who receives the comment, reward, or verbal praise. This is the norm in the majority of classrooms. The teacher does the giving, and the students do the receiving. Acknowledgement from peer to peer is an opportunity for creating a dynamic learning environment. If people come to value acknowledgment as a critical part of a positive learning environment, perhaps they will see its value in the larger world.

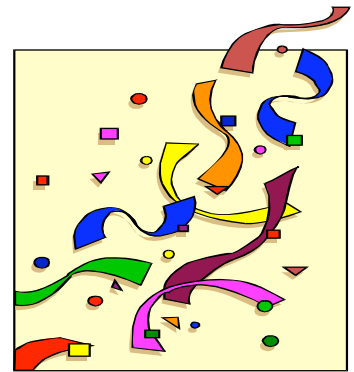
Do It Standing



It is a typical classroom setting. The students come into the room and take a seat. They listen to a lecture, remaining seated. They move into circles and hold a small group discussion. As before, they remain in their chairs. A large group discussion ensues, and the students remain in their chairs. A video is put on, and the students watch from their chairs. Several overheads are shown, and once again, students are left in their seats. In an interactive environment, it is natural that students will be involved in a number of different forms of instruction. Several are perfectly suited for standing instead of sitting.

Getting Responses

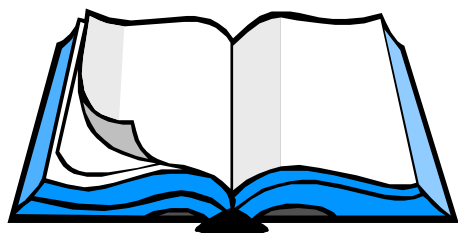
If, in your estimation, your audience may be reluctant to interact in a large group discussion, give them time to prepare first by having a brief preparatory discussion in a pair or trio with other students. This provides them with the opportunity to clarify for them what they are thinking. It also helps them organize their words so they feel more articulate and more confident when the discussion begins. This is referred to as moving the students from *listening mode* to *talking mode* with a smoother transition. Added confidence may also make it more likely that a reticent student will participate in the conversation. Even one minute of small group discussion may be sufficient to generate a higher level of interaction than might have been possible otherwise.



Layering

Layering refers to the structure a teacher uses in order to communicate a specific sequence of steps in a lesson. It is a technique for subdividing activities, learning sessions, or instruction periods. The purpose is to assist in the development a central idea through a sequential deliberate addition of new elements onto what is already known.

Open Vs Closed



A question posed in the *closed* format indicates there is single correct response, and usually implies that the teacher is the only one who knows it. A question posed in the *open* format (1) allows students to have accountability for the veracity of their response, and (2) indicates there are more than one possible correct response. It is clear that there are times when a teacher should use the closed form of a question (for example “What’s the speed of light?”). However, in a surprisingly high number of learning circumstances, opportunities exist for thinking and reflecting on key ideas. In these situations, the open form of a question is preferable. This allows for deeper levels of processing, which in the long term may result in higher levels of retention.

Ownership

Everyone appreciates feeling valued for what they can contribute. Students enjoy feeling as if they are an important part of the learning process. Teachers must continue to generate ways in which they can communicate this message to their students. This communication can be blatant, such as asking students to help in arranging a room, or less obvious, such as giving them the opportunity to generate questions for the speaker about his or her background. An increased sense of ownership and responsibility is created when students are invited to be a part of their education, growth, and development.

Specify The Response

This expression refers to situations where audience members are being asked to respond to a question. In these circumstances, teachers should be certain to clearly specify *how* they are expecting the audience to respond. Knowing what they are expected to do will allow students to feel more comfortable with their interactions with the teacher. Repeated use of this technique will generate a heightened sense of security within the classroom, and may even lead to increased levels of participation by “less confident” members of the audience.

Telling New Stories



Why Tell New Stories...

The need to tell new stories (about self) is greatest during adolescence. That is the focus of the next extract, but the need to tell new stories can occur throughout life - whenever we respond to change or make a change new experiences will be more valuable if there are also good opportunities to tell new stories.

Many of our experiences tend to get squeezed into ready-made storylines, which don't do justice to the experience. People whose "stories" have got into the papers know all too well how their own personal experience can get distorted to fit what the newspaper wants to tell its readers.

The new world that activities can open up would be lost or trivialized in a similar way if we rush to squeeze new experiences into clichéd storylines.

Stories are more likely to fit new experiences if they are original and homegrown. They must CONNECT...

The value of activities in working with young people does not just depend on what is experienced during an activity. It also depends on the kinds of the connections that are made with other experiences.

We continually come to know our world and ourselves by making connections between past, present and future. Threads and themes help us to draw separate experiences together into stories about who we are and ourselves.

This process stops once people come to depend too much on stories which have served them well in the past, or which have helped them to survive. When this happens, people have effectively made up their minds about themselves and their world: *they have stopped learning from experience.*

Young people's development is also held back if people around them are not letting them change or grow up: they may have liked them too much as they used to be, or they may have written them off, perhaps labeling them as 'trouble-maker', 'slow learner' or 'failure'.

Young people may be unlucky enough to live in a world of ready-made connections in which whatever they do gets explained by themselves or by others in terms of outdated stories or labels from the past.

Introducing new activities into this kind of world does not automatically lead to more hopeful and open-ended stories: young people may need some help to learn from these experiences and to make connections. And others in their world may need some encouragement to change their past prejudices and allow young people to change and grow.

Paired Shares

Up until now we've focused on the mind, body. Now we will be focusing on the person. Who in this room have you not met or do not know well? In a moment I'll ask you to find a partner. This partner should be someone you have not had a chance to meet or know very well. When you find them have a seat with them somewhere in the room

In a moment I will give out a question. One person will have 2 minutes to talk about it. Then we will switch and the second person will have 2 minutes to share. You will be instructed to switch by the facilitator.

First person, your role will be to do this. (Demonstrate Listening) Simply, be silent and listen to the other person. If the person runs out of things to say, stay silent, they'll find more to talk about. Here is the first question.

- 1) **Describe Your Room Using all 5 Senses**
(Demo It) Turn and face your partner. Please sit cross-legged or in chairs facing each other. Tuck in tight so that you are knee to knee. When they are finished have them Have the students thank their partner. Find yet another person that you do not know well.
- 2) **Describe a Best Friend**
You could describe the physical characteristics of your friend, such as (give examples), However, we would like to offer a different angle. Please describe the personal characteristics that you appreciate about your friend. For example... (give examples). Thank your partner... find new person.
- 3) **Influential Person or Mentor**
Same as the friend
Thank your partner... find new person
- 4) **Moment of Courage** In a moment you will have the opportunity to share with your partner a moment when you were courageous. Please listen to our definition of courage. Courage is personal. For some people sky diving takes courage. For others it doesn't. For some, telling the truth to a good friend when it could possibly damage the friendship takes courage. Courage is personal. One of our beliefs, is that all people are courageous. To be here today you have to have been courageous. For some being here at this class might be an act of courage.
- 5) **A Dream** - Future aspirations
(Get them into groups of 4 for the next share)

Autobiographies

Introduce why we are doing it - laying the foundation for risk taking later in the course. Opening ourselves up in a safe arena to discover what is there.

Explain what will happen - place students into groups of 10 - 12, and each person will have 6 minutes to respond to the following question - "Here are some things about me that you don't know, that if you did, would help you better understand me."

Show the question on the flipchart

"Here are some things about me that you don't know, that if you did, would help you better understand me."

Have a role model come to the front - give students their six minutes. If needed, guide their sharing by asking questions which lead them into their heart. When their six minutes is complete, acknowledge them.

Find a group - Arrange their chairs in a circle.

Remind them to be appropriate - How far you go is up to you. Take an appropriate risk.

Begin - Six minutes per person, with us timing them. We'll make a 'one minute remaining announcement'

At the end - Debrief with these possible questions -
 What happened?
 How are you doing now?
 What did you learn?



Strength Acknowledgements

In 1980, in Seattle, there was a study done on healthy families. The researchers tape-recorded normal dinnertime conversations. Then they went back and counted the total number of 'negatives' said, for example, negative statements like: 'Don't do that' or 'You shouldn't....' or 'Stop that' or 'No, I don't think so.'

How many negations do you think they recorded?
Average for a healthy family over a 35-Minute meal: 120 negations!

How can you support others in your school? - Flip Chart

We get so used to negative communication that we don't even notice. It's like we have a 'garbage-detector' on - always finding the fault in others.

To turn this around - what have you noticed about the people around that you really appreciate? What's special about them? It could be as simple as...

- I like your smile!
- I enjoy your sense of humor!
- It was great when you gave me a hug when I walked in!

It may feel like you have nothing to share with some people, but usually it's because we aren't used to saying, even though we've noticed.

Directions: (small groups 8 - 12 per group)-depending on the size of over all group - Chairs in a circle

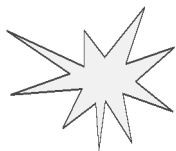
One person begins - (30 seconds)
She/he shares what he/she feels are good qualities about themselves.

Once Time is broadcasted - the rest of the group has (3 minutes) to tell that person what they really enjoyed about them during the class.

The person that receives the strength acknowledgements may only respond with "Thank You."

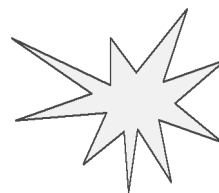
After 3 minutes - next person begins the sequence again until everyone in the group has experienced the acknowledgements.

- ☐ **Person**
30 Seconds
- ☐ **Team**
3 Minutes
- ☐ **Person**
"Thank You"



References

Social Emotional



- Allen, Richard, H. (2000). *Impact Teaching*, Needham, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Borba, Michele, (2003) *No more misbehavin': 38 Difficult behaviors and how to stop them*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Bowman, R., Carr, T., Cooper, K., Miles, R., & Toner, T., (1998). *Innovative Strategies Fro Unlocking Difficult Adolescents*, Chapin, North Carolina: Youthlight, Inc.
- Bowman, Sharon L. (2005). *The ten-minute trainer: 150 ways to teach it quick & make it stick!* San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.
- Diamond, Marian, (1998). *Enriching heredity: The impact of the environment on the anatomy of the brain*, New York, NY: Free Press.
- Diamond, Marian, and Hopson, Janet, (1998). *Magic trees of the mind: How to nurture your child's intelligence, creativity, and healthy emotions from birth through adolescence*, New York, NY: Dutton-Penguin Putnam Inc.
- DePorter, Bobbie, Reardon Mark & Nourie Sarah Singer (1999). *Quantum Teaching: Orchestrating student success*, Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Feinstein, Sheryl, (2004). *Secrets of the teenage brain: Research-based strategies for reaching & teaching today's adolescents*, San Diego, CA: The Brain Store.
- Fogarty, Robin, (1997). *Brain compatible classrooms*, Arlington Heights, Illinois: Skylight Training and Publishing Inc.
- Gibbs, Jeanne. (2000). *Tribes: A new way of learning and being together*, Sausalito, CA: CenterSource Systems.
- Glasser, William, (2002). *Unhappy Teenagers: A way for parents and teachers to reach them*, New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Goleman, Daniel, (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*, New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Goleman, Daniel, Dali Lama, (2004). *Destructive emotions: How can we overcome them?* New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Goleman, Daniel, (2006). *Social Intelligence*, New York, New York: Bantam Books.
- Jensen, Eric, (2005). *Teaching with the brain in mind 2Ed*, Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Kotulak, Ronald, (1996). *Inside the brain: Revolutionary discoveries of how the mind works*, Andrews and McMeely. Kansas City, Missouri: A Universal Press Syndicate Company.
- Mendes, E' (2003). *Empty the Cup ... Before You Fill it Up: Relationship-Building Activities to Promote Effective Learning Environments*. Carlsbad, CA: Mendes Training & Consulting, Inc.
- Mendes, E. (2003). What Empathy Can Do. *Educational Leadership*, 61(1),56-59.
- Pink, Daniel H. (2006). *A whole mind: Why right-brainers, will rule the future*, New York, NY: Riverhead Books.
- Ramey, Craig T and Ramey, Sharon L., (1999). *Right from birth: Building your child's foundation for life*, New York, NY: Goddard Press.
- Sapolsky, Robert, (1994). *Why zebras don't get ulcers*, New York, NY: W.H. Freeman and Company.
- Sylwester, Robert (2005). *How to explain a Brain: An educators handbook of brain terms and cognitive processes*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Notes

[illegible]

[illegible]